DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 072 017 SP 006 085

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TITLE	Value Patterns of Elementary Teachers and Their Reactions to Religious Issues in the Classroom.
INSTITUTION	Southern State Coll., Magnolia, Ark.
PUB DATE	72
NOTE	24p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Elementary School Teachers; Personal Values; *Religious Differences; *Religious Factors; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Education; *Teacher Response
IDENTIFIERS	School Districts of Southwest Arkansas

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the religious value patterns of elementary teachers in relation to attitudes expressed toward religious issues in the classroom. The variable "religion" was defined operationally in terms of a wide range of value patterns which might qualify as authentic value orientations in contemporary American society. A field study proceeded by administering two paper-pencil instruments to a sample of 207 teachers from random school districts in rural southwest Arkansas: (1) Inventory of Religious and Ethical Ways and (2) the Classroom Problems Inventory. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov two-tailed nonparametric statistic for independent samples was applied to the data. Findings indicated that teachers with traditional classroom attitudes toward religious issues differed significantly from teachers with non-traditional attitudes in their rankings of several value patterns. These differences reflected a trend for teachers to manifest a classroom point of view consistent with their personal beliefs. It was consequently suggested that teacher education give greater attention to curricular experiences which assist the prospective teacher to become aware of his value orientation. Such self-clarification in the affective domain of educational objectives may be helpful in handling controversial issues in the public school classroom. Two tables of statistical data were presented. (Author)

ED 072017

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(In effect, these are the closing paragraphs of the article under the last division, "Summary")

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(Outline)

I. Introduction

II. Problem and Rationale

III. Procedure

IV. Results

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VII. Summary

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Donald A. Lau

Introduction

Part of the present day dilemma concerning the role of religion in public education lies in the confusion which obscures a definition of the variable "religion." Numerous legal actions of the past two decades have attested to the need for a better understanding of the several dimensions of religion and their proper relationship to public education. How often, for example, do educators and concerned parents differentiate among such dimensions of religion as the "experiential, the ideological, the ritualistic, the intellectual, and the consequential" (Glock and Stark, 1965)?

The failure to differentiate these dimensions may well be illustrated by the mixed public reactions to decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court in the Engel (1962) and Abington (1963) cases. The Court ruled against the state sponsorship of various devotional exercises, but it explicitly stated the possibility of the formal or objective study of religion in the context of the curriculum of the school. Several state education departments, school districts, and local schools presently engage in this latter kind of educational activity.

While various groups debate the wisdom of recent Court decisions, a more penetrating question might be raised. Empirical research by Burnes (1964) and Hill (1966) suggested that religious beliefs could be taught "informally" in an unorganized and disguised way extrinsic to any subjects which comprise the curriculum. Further, this informal teaching could occur without the necessity of the event of devotional practices as prayer and Bible reading. Perhaps the paramount role of the teacher in the classroom does provide the opportunity for the conscious or unconsious verbalizations of his beliefs in the informal discussions related to daily classroom activities. This kind of teaching activity in relation to religion appears to be particularly crucial at the elementary level where the learner cannot discriminate for himself as adequately as the learner who is at the secondary level.

Problem and Rationale

It was the purpose of this study to investigate the relationship between the religious value patterns of elementary teachers and their attitudes toward religious issues in the classroom. Religious value patterns were viewed as those merged configurations of cognitive and affective value constructs which are presumed to be indicative of some present day ultimate concerns. It was hypothesized that the motivating, energizing, and direction-giving effect of religious beliefs expressed in these terms might be exhibited by attitudes of the teachers in various classroom activities and particularly in those situations where issues of a general religious nature might arise.

Tillich (1959), as a philosophical theologian, submitted that a person, consciously or subconsciously, has commitments to existential issues which give meaning to his life. The meaning engendered in such commitments are determinative and suggestive of those elements which comprise one's religion--be they theistic or non-theistic in nature. Tillich (1957) further defined religion as that about which one has an "ultimate concern." Dewey (1934) likewise took a broad view of religion by distinguishing between "religion" and the "religious." He maintained that one can be "religious" without

being committed to a particular historic religion. Clyde Kluckhohn (1952) and Florence Kluckhohn (1964) reported that a person's "value orientation" includes existential assumptions which contribute toward an understanding of his behavior.

In the history of American education, however, "religion" has generally had more limited connotations than the recent understandings previously described. In early America, "religion" had specific reference to the Judaic-Christian tradition, and moreover, to the Protestant aspect of that tradition. In effect, the schools prior to mid-nineteenth century promoted the practice of religious exercises and moral teaching based upon the Bible. Since that time, a great variety of ethnic groups have challenged the Protestant establishment. The religious implications of a free society for present day Americans, however, are evidently not fully accepted. While religious freedom is an idealized platitude, Americans are yet hesitant on the relativity implied with a pluralism of values.[1] A specific instance of this hesitancy centers upon the question of what constitutes the proper function of religion in public education. This ambivalence is vividly annunciated by the increasing number of litigations on record in recent years.

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[1]The unacceptance of pluralism is evidenced, for example, by the many "prayer" amendment proposals since 1962. A recent action sponsored by U.S. House Representative Chalmers P. Wylie (Ohio) in September 1971 has forced a new "non-denominational prayer" amendment out of the Judiciary Committee. A majority of the House via 218 signatures is pressured by constituents--or seemingly feel, that America must be a "Christian" nation despite protection in the First Amendment concerning the "establishment" and "free exercise" of religion.

Previous research has indicated the teacher's role as one which does not escape the truism that education is a value-laden activity. Prince (1957) found that secondary students with "traditional" values rated teachers with similar values as highly effective, while students with "emergent" values rated teachers highly when teachers held emergent values. The Massialas et al. (1969) study of secondary teachers revealed a relationship between teachers' socio-political values and their handling of controversial issues in the classroom. Three studies sampled elementary teachers. Bowie and Morgan (1962) reported significant differences between teachers' classroom behaviors in relation to dominant value patterns characterized as "political" and "religious" on the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values scale. Burnes (1964) and Hill (1966) each demonstrated the possibility of a teaching activity which could be described as the "informal teaching of religion" in the elementary classroom. Neither of the latter two studies, however, investigated the value orientation of the sampled teachers beyond the elusive categories of denominational affiliation.

Procedure

Sample-- The investigator met at elementary schools for one hour at pre-arranged dates in Spring, 1968. A stratified random sampling of school districts in rural southwest Arkansas was based

upon the rural-urban population ratio of the area. Usable data from 207 teachers showed a racial ratio of 2 to 1 between white and black. By religious affiliation, the sample was entirely Protestant with a 40 to 38 percent bimodal preference for Baptist and Methodist respectively. The number of teachers in the age groups 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, and 50 or above was distributed nearly equally. All respondents indicated the receipt of a baccaluaureate degree.

Instrumentation--Teachers' classroom attitudes were measured by a content analysis of their open-end written responses to hypothetical classroom situations in the Classroom Problems Inventory (CPI).[1] Eight of the 13 CPI items served as decoys which dealt with such varied problems as classroom cheating, stealing, and teaching about the United Nations. Interspersed among these decoys were five items dealing with specific religious issues. Decoy items minimized the teachers' suspicions that they were being evaluated on the informal teaching of religion. A two minute time limit to read, react, and write for each situation was controlled by presenting the situations independently via screened overhead projection. The five religious questions of the CPI focused upon the classroom situations described in full below. Identifying captions are added herein only:

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[1]Adapted from Burnes (1964) Classroom Problems Test.

Meaning of Life and Death (MD)

One morning the children come to school with the knowledge that a classmate, who had been hospitalized, had died. You and the children are grieved by the loss of this child, and during a discussion of what the class might do to help, a child wants to know why we have to die. Your response might be...

Origins of Life (OL)

During a lesson on the study of early man, the children are asked to answer the question of where man originated. The science book from which the lesson was taken stresses the evolution of man from the lower forms of life. One child wants to know where the simplest creatures (from which the others evolved) came from. Your response might be...

Church and State (CS)

After realizing many of your children do not really know the Pledge of Allegiance, you decide to go through each phrase and discuss it. During the discussion one child asks why the phrase "one nation under God" was added to the Pledge. Your response might be...

Moral Conflict (MC)

In a discussion of Russia in social studies, one child says that Communists are no good because they don't believe in God. "They will never beat us," she says, "because God is on our side." Your response might be...

Divine Involvement in History (DI)

During a discussion of recent successful space launchings one child wonders if God will get angry if we "keep pushing closer to heaven." Your response might be...

Content analysis scoring of the CPI followed Berelson's (1952) guidelines by establishing three coding categories on a religious-secular continuum. A "Traditional" religious category supported those concepts which suggested theism whereas a "secular" category supported those notions which suggested non-theistic attitudes. An "indeterminate" category supported those responses which suggested equally both theistic and non-theistic attitudes. Since the secular and indeterminate categories represented respectively only 14 and 22 percent of the total responses, they were combined and identified in the final analysis as "Non-traditional" classroom attitudes. An intra-coder reliability check yielded a Scott (1955) coefficient of .90 while an inter-coder reliability was a Scott coefficient of .85.

Teachers' religious value patterns were measured by their ratings and rankings of the nine paragraph "Ways" contained in the Inventory of Religious and Ethical Ways (IREW).[1] Each paragraph represented a specific "Way" of viewing the religious and ethical life. Based upon the rating-ranking methodology of Morris (1956), the instrument provided a seven-point Likert scale for each Way on a like-dislike continuum. The second part of the

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[1]The IREW was adapted from a series of instruments originally used in a values study at International Christian University, Mitaka, Japan. For specific details on this instrument, see Donald A. Lau, "Value Patterns of Elementary Teachers in Relation to Attitudes Expressed Toward Religious Issues in the Classroom," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Syracues University, 1970.

IREW required that the teacher rank the rated Ways from the Most Preferred to the Least Preferred. Consequently, the rankings were used in analysis of the data. It was felt the twofold rating-ranking methodology would yield a more accurate measure of a respondent's value orientation than would the rating method alone. The decision-making required in the ranking methodology seemed a semblance of the conflicting decisions encountered in the activity of daily living.

The IREW paragraph Ways, each consisting of 160-180 words, were expressed in a terminology to fulfill two criteria. First, the paragraph Ways must be recognized and understood by any informed layman committed to that particular faith or way of believing. A second criterion prohibited the use of proper nouns in the descriptive formulation of each paragraph. The latter criterion enhanced the possibility of gaining a response indicative of both the cognitive and affective aspects of a value construct. The inclusion of a proper noun, it was thought, might encourage the respondents to react prematurely on an emotional judgment alone or simply on the basis of a response set to a stimulus generalization. In assigning a rank to each of the paragraph Ways, the teacher was merely indicating her order of preferences among nine options. To rank Way 5 (RPL) first, for example, would mean that this value pattern is most preferred in relation to the other Ways. The following statements represent only a brief summary or key to each of the longer paragraph Ways of the IREW. Italicized captions and abbreviations did not appear on the instrument.

WAY 1: Buddhism as a Way of Self-Discipline (BUD)
In self-discipline to control desires for things material and emotional, we reach tranquility where there is neither self nor outer world. This constitutes the highest fulfillment.

WAY 2: Nationalism (NAT)
Religion finds its appropriate role in nurturing and serving the national heritage and culture.

WAY 3: Christianity as a Way of Life (CHL)
Seeking to live as Jesus lived and taught, and to die as he died if necessary, is the essence of the moral life.

WAY 4: Religion as an American Way of Utility (AMU)
Religion is identified closely with an American middle-class value system and includes such tenets as achievement, success, and affluence.

WAY 5: Religious Pluralism (RPL)
Men in all societies have recognized a need for deity or deities, and their religions have given a sense of destiny. Thus all religions are worthy of respect.

WAY 6: Christianity as a Way of Salvation (CHS)
Faith in God's saving grace through his Son, buttressed by works, is the way to salvation.

WAY 7: Atheism (ATH)
As scientific and other forms of research reveal the nature of man and the universe, religion becomes obsolete and takes its place with mythology.

WAY 8: Religion as Intellectual Inquiry (IIQ)
The wonders of science and the revelations of religion mutually emphasize the finiteness of man and the infiniteness of truth. Religion provides answers to the questions of human existence.

WAY 9: Jewish Tradition (JEW)
God's will for man, especially his requirement of justice in the social order, has been made known to all men. But it is especially illuminated for an ancient people who transmit and learn his law or Torah, the fulfillment of which would eventually lead to world peace.

It may be observed that only Ways 1, 3, 6, and 9 represent religion as historically classified. The Christian tradition, differentiated on the "faith vs. works" controversy, is designated respectively by two Ways: Christianity as a Way of Salvation and Christianity as a Way of Life.

Statistical Method. --The Kolmogorov-Smirnov two-sample nonparametric statistic (Siegel, 1956) determines the degree of agreement between two cumulative distributions. This test focuses upon the largest of the observed cumulative differences (D) of the several step functions or intervals of the two distributions. A two-tailed test was applied to detect differences between Traditional and Non-traditional classroom attitudes toward religious issues of the CPI in relation to each of the nine Ways or value patterns measured by the IREW.

[INSERT TABLE 1]

Results.--Statistical differences at the $p \leq .05$ significance level were found (Table 1) between four religious value patterns and classroom attitudes expressed toward three different religious issues. Positive D's of .203 and .191 on Way 1 (BUD) and Way 6 (CHS) indicate that teachers with Traditional classroom attitudes toward the religious issues DI and OL ranked the respective value pattern Ways higher than those teachers responding with Non-traditional classroom

TABLE 1.--Frequency and percent of traditional vs. non-traditional classroom attitude responses to religious issues and teacher rankings of value patterns Way 1 (BUD), Way 6 (CHS), Way 7 (ATH), Way 8 (IIQ)

Religious Issue and Classroom Attitude	Rankings of Value Patterns									N and %	D
	High			Middle			Low				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
	Buddhism as a Way of Self-Discipline (Way 1)										
Traditional	6	4	6	11	10	9	16	45	38	145	
DI	4.1	2.8	4.1	7.6	6.9	6.2	11.0	31.0	26.2	100.0	.203*
Non-trad'l.	1	1	1	0	3	6	5	14	27	58	
	1.7	1.7	1.7	.0	5.2	10.4	8.6	24.1	46.6	100.0	
	Christianity as a Way of Salvation (Way 6)										
Traditional	26	20	11	11	14	9	8	0	4	103	
OL	25.2	19.4	10.7	10.7	13.6	8.7	7.8	.0	3.9	100.0	.191*
Non-trad'l.	10	14	13	14	18	11	8	3	3	94	
	10.6	14.9	13.8	14.9	19.2	11.7	8.5	3.2	3.2	100.0	
	Atheism (Way 7)										
Traditional	0	0	0	1	1	6	12	36	89	145	
DI	.0	.0	.0	.7	.7	4.1	8.3	24.8	61.4	100.0	-.234**
Non-trad'l	0	1	0	3	0	4	3	25	22	58	
	.0	1.7	.0	5.2	.0	6.9	5.2	43.1	37.9	100.0	
	Religion as a Way of Intellectual Inquiry (Way 8)										
Traditional	19	14	16	17	16	23	32	16	4	157	
CS	12.1	8.9	10.2	10.8	10.2	14.7	20.4	10.2	2.5	100.0	-.217 *
Non-trad'l.	7	3	12	8	4	4	7	1	1	47	
	14.9	6.4	25.6	17.0	8.5	8.5	14.9	2.1	2.1	100.0	

DI Divine Involvement in History
OL Origins of Life
CS Church and State

Levels of Significance:
*p= .05 **p= .025

attitudes on the same issues. On the other hand, negative D's of .234 and .217 on Way 7 (ATH) and Way 8 (IIQ) indicate that teachers with Non-traditional classroom attitudes toward the religious issues DI and CS ranked the respective Ways higher than those teachers responding with Traditional classroom attitudes on the same issues. Table 1 also reflects the highest frequency (N=94) of Non-traditional responses occuring with the religious issue "Origins of Life" (OL).

[INSERT TABLE 2]

While Table 2 includes the statistically significant D's of Table 1, it further presents a summary of all D's from pairing each of the nine Ways with each of the five classroom issues. Again, negative D's are associated with higher rankings of a Way by teachers with Non-traditional attitudes toward classroom religious issues. Or conversely, positive D's indicated higher rankings of a Way by teachers with Traditional attitudes toward the same classroom issues. If the sign or direction of the highest D be observed for each of the nine Ways, there is a trend for negative D's to be associated with Ways beyond the historic religious classifications while positive D's are associated with the Ways historically designated as religious.

TABLE 2--Summary of largest cumulative differences (Γ) between traditional and non-traditional classroom attitude distributions on religious issues in relation to value patterns of teachers

Value Pattern	Religious Issue				
	Meaning of Life and Death (MD)	Origins of Life (OL)	Church and State (CS)	Moral Conflict (MC)	Divine Involvement in History (DI)
Buddhism (Way 1)	.037	-.127	.078	.059	.203*
Nationalism (Way 2)	-.033	-.058	.191	.073	-.089
Xnity...Life (Way 3)	.098	.076	-.097	-.064	-.072
American Utility (Way 4)	.115	-.177***	.141	-.108	.072
Pluralism (Way 5)	.072	-.070	-.089	-.097	-.120
Xnity...Salvation (Way 6)	-.052	.191*	.100	.098	.068
Atheism (Way 7)	.079	.054	-.021	-.067	-.234**
Intellectual Inquiry ((Way 8)	-.160	-.083	-.217*	.094	-.079
Judaism (Way 9)	-.038	.107	-.071	.128	.093

Levels of Signifance: ***p= .10 *p= .05 **p=.025

Note:

Negative D differences reported in Tables 1 and 2 indicate higher rankings of a Way by teachers holding Non-traditional classroom attitudes whereas positive D differences indicate higher rankings of a Way by teachers holding Traditional classroom attitudes toward religious issues.

Discussion

Two observations appear related to data analysis outcomes. First, the aptness of a specific classroom issue to the teacher's immediate experience might be pertinent to the findings. No significant results were found in relation to the MD and MC issues. On the other hand, significant results involved the "pledge of allegiance" incident (CS), the "science lesson on man" (OL), and the "space launching" event (DI). The relevance of space events[1] concurrent to the period of data collection may account for notable statistical differences. Another current event may further account for the findings associated with the classroom incident questioning the beginning of the earliest form of life (OL). Through mass media, teachers were probably aware of the Susan Epperson vs. State of Arkansas case which had developed in Little Rock concerning the academic freedom of a science teacher.[2] Teachers may have felt a deeper sense of existential involvement in the two particular religious issues, DI and OL. These data may therefore imply the

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[1] Surveyor 7, for example, was an unmanned lunar landing accomplished in January 1968. Plans were also being formulated for the Apollo 7 (October 1968) and Apollo 8 (December 1968) manned missions. Several Russian Cosmos launchings were executed in April 1968. Data for the present research were collected between March 15 and May 15, 1968.

[2] About seven months subsequent to data collection, the Arkansas anti-evolution law was declared unconstitutional on November 7, 1968 by the United States Supreme Court. The former Arkansas statute had prohibited the study of evolutionary theory in tax supported schools. The law further stipulated that a violator shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and that he may be fined up to $500 in addition to dismissal from his position.

kinds of conditions under which relationships between personal values and behavior should be studied. The context (either narrowly or broadly defined) of manifest behavior may be a determinative variable toward any realistic understanding of the functioning of individual value orientations. If the context, for example, were a Sunday adult church school class, would the same teachers respond similarly to the CPI?

The second observation for discussion concerns the possible obfuscation of significant findings due to the logistics of including two Christian Ways in the IREW. Maybe only one Christian Way should have been utilized since the coding categories for the CPI did not differentiate beyond the theistic-nontheistic types of responses. With this consideration, a replica study with another sample of teachers might illuminate with still greater clarity the relationship investigated in the present research.

Implications

Since data from this study suggested the existence of some relationship between teachers' religious value patterns and classroom behaviors, one may raise a suspecting question, "Is the American public school another satellite of the Protestant Sunday School?"

The conceptual scheme of the present study may suggest a framework for further empirical studies which include the exploration of viable relationships between religion and public education in a

pluralistic society. At the levels of practice and policy, for example, the teacher education program in preservice and inservice phases might re-evaluate its efforts in attaining educational objectives often characterized as the "affective" domain. Do present curricula in general education and/or teacher education provide those experiences necessary for teacher candidates to become aware of their value orientations? While this study did not reveal the extent of value-awareness, it seems that any understanding of the problem of handling "controversial" issues in the classroom should begin with some kind of previous value-clarification as part of teacher education. The process of differentiating and clarifying one's own commitment may well provide the opportunity for freely recognizing other options and loyalties which are held to be equally valid by their committed adherents.

Any educational research which shows trends toward relationships between personal value orientations and behavioral practices tends to dispel certain precepts surrounding the myth of human objectivity. Several related questions may now be posed: Does the activity of teaching demand suprahuman powers which enable one to be neutral once he enters the classroom? Or, can and should bias be admitted without engaging in a type of indoctrinating activity? Is neutrality really an admissible option if notions such as the democratic way and critical thinking are esteemed goals?

At levels of research, policy, and practice, further credence must be given to the interdependent relationship between the cognitive and affective aspects of the educational process. A scientific approach to value education is urgently needed, but it too must be explicit in recognizing the philosophic assumptions inherent within a methodology. At the level of practice, I am not presently suggesting a proliferation of courses as the answer to the need for value education. On the contrary, I am raising more fundmental questions concerning the interface between authoritative instructional strategies and inflexible school structures which hinder inquiry and discovery on the part of the student. In this sense, value education is to be understood as a process rather than a superimposed product of Brand X.

On the legal issue in religion, it makes little difference what the Court has declared if curriculum consists ultimately in the varied experiences which occur after the teacher shuts his classroom door and beholds a captive audience. In effect, it appears that the distinction often made between teaching <u>of</u> religion and the teaching <u>about</u> religion may be inconsequential. Explicitly, the haphazard approach generally followed <u>does</u> reflect a point of view. Depending upon one's understanding of himself and society, the teacher's point of view might be described in sectarian, anti-religious, or pluralistic terms. The basic question for educators to face is not "Shall we teach values

in the public schools?" More pointedly, the educational establishment is confronted with the real question of "What values shall we teach?" in a changing and pluralistic society.

Summary

It was the purpose of this study to investigate the religious value patterns of elementary teachers in relation to attitudes expressed toward religious issues in the classroom. The variable "religion" was defined operationally in terms of a wide range of value patterns which might qualify as authentic value orientations in contemporary American society. A field study proceeded by administering two paper-pencil instruments to a sample of 207 teachers from random school districts in rural southwest Arkansas: (1) Inventory of Religious and Ethical Ways and (2) the Classroom Problems Inventory. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov two-tailed nonparametric statistic for independent samples was applied to the data.

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EDUCATION

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ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION March-1972: "Clarifying the 'Effective' Criterion in Teaching" by IMPROVING COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHING